

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9364

AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

COMUSNAVPHIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 2893

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, SN

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: (A) STATE 089227; (B) MANILA 5135

1. MISSION COMMUNICATED MESSAGE PARA 1, REF A TO RESPONSIBLE UNHCR OFFICIAL (GOBIUS) THIS MORNING. GOBIUS RESPONDED BY READING CABLE HE HAD RECEIVED FROM UNHCR REP DHAR IN MANILA, REPORTING INTER ALIA DHAR'S DEMARCHE TO COLLANTES ON APRIL 12. DHAR REPORTED THAT AS RESULT OF HIS MEETING WITH COLLANTES WHO, HE SAID, WAS "INDIGNANT OVER U.S. ABDICATING ITS MORAL RESPONSIBILITIES" FOR THESE REFUGEES, DECISION WAS TAKEN THAT REFUGEES WOULD BE "ALLOWED" AND NOT RPT NOT "FORCED" BY PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED TO SUBIC AS HAD BEEN ORIGINAL INTENTION. GOBIUS, WHO FULLY UNDERSTANDS U.S. POSITION, CONSIDERS THAT PHILIPPINES HAVE ALREADY DE FACTO ASSUMED THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS REGARD BY PERMITTING REFUGEES TO REMAIN AT PUERTO PRINCESSA, AND BY NOT FORCING THE BOATS BACK TO SEA. HE MADE POINT THAT SUBIC IS ALSO PHILIPPINE TERRITORY, AND NOT EXTRA-TERRITORIAL, AND THAT SHOULD REFUGEES ELECT TO PROCEED THERE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PHILIPPINES WOULD BE EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM AS ON

PALAWAN.

2. MEANWHILE, GOBIUS CONTINUED, UNHCR IS DOING ITS BEST TO GET THESE REFUGEES RESETTLED, PRINCIPALLY, AS INDICATED REF B, IN U.S., FRANCE AND CANADA, WHERE "ALMOST ALL FAMILIES" HAVE RELATIVES. DHAR HAS REPORTED THAT GROUP IS "WELL-CONNECTED AND WELL-QUALIFIED" AND HE CONSIDERS THEM RELATIVELY EASY TO RESETTLE. GOBIUS UNDERSTANDS THAT A U.S. VISA HAS ALREADY BEEN ISSUED TO ONE FAMILY (CHIN?) AND HE CONSIDERS THAT "THERE WILL NOT BE A MAJOR PROBLEM" IN RESETTLEMENT. DHAR ALSO REPORTED HIS FEELING THAT GROUP WOULD STAY AT PUERTO PRINCESSA, WHERE RED CROSS IS SAID TO BE CARING FOR THEM. HE BELIEVES THAT PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT WILL BE REASSURED AS IT SEES ARRANGEMENTS PROGRESSING FOR RESETTLEMENT OF FAMILIES ELSEWHERE.

3. IN BRIEF, UNHCR CONSIDERS THAT DHAR'S DEMARCHE TO COLLANTES HAS HAD DESIRED EFFECT OF AVERTING FORCED MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES TO SUBIC, THAT PHILIPPINES HAS DE FACTO ACCEPTED ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, AND THAT SITUATION IS IN PROCESS OF SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION. GOBIUS GAVE ASSURANCE THAT DHAR WOULD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN ACTIVE WATCH ON SITUATION TO ASSURE CORRECT PHILIPPINE ATTITUDE WITH RESPECT TO REFUGEES. ABRAMS

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